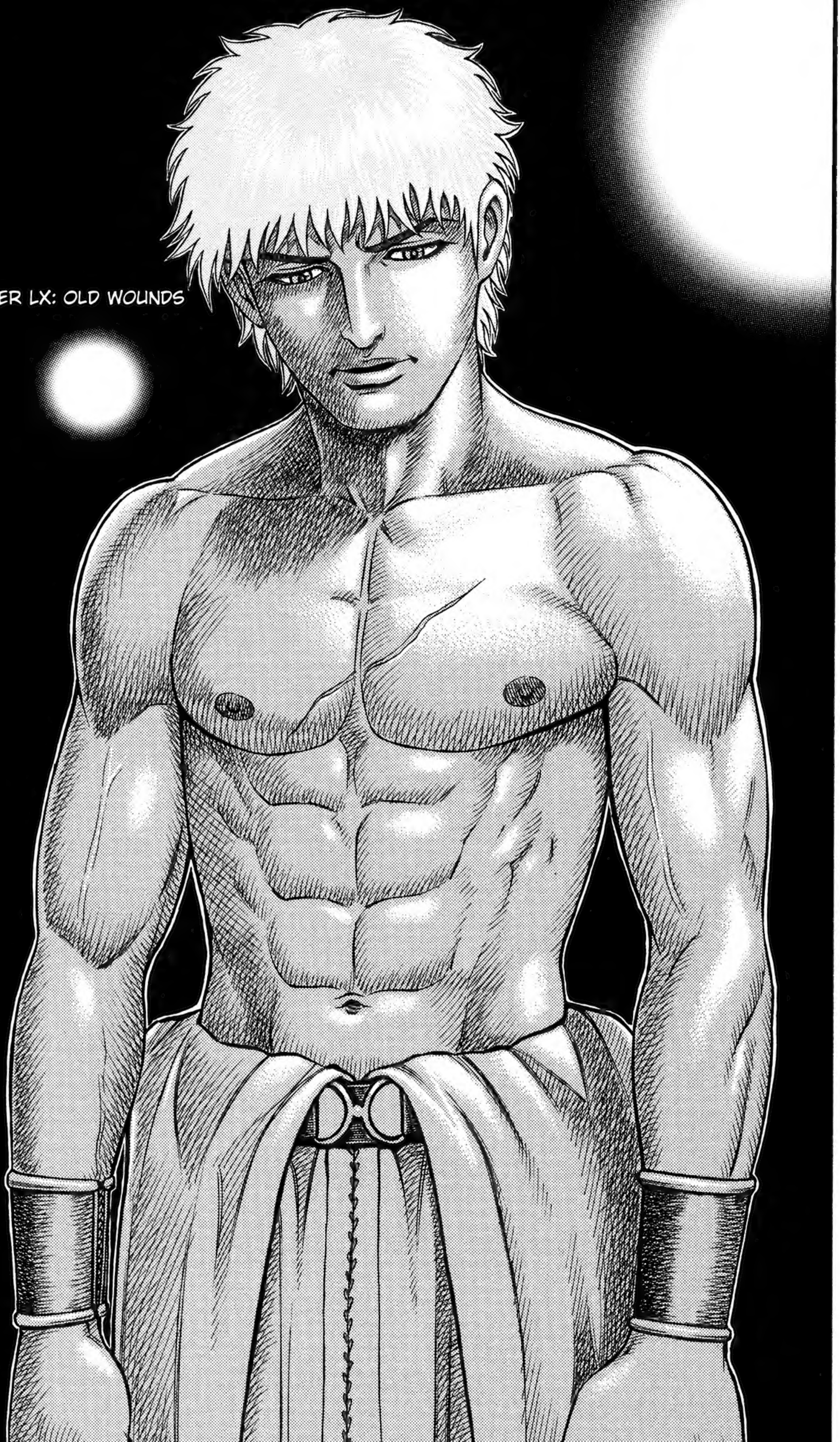
CHAPTER LX: OLD WOUNDS



YOU SIMPLETON!

YOUR ABSENTMINDEDNESS POSED A THREAT TO THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE REGIMENT!

YOU EXPOSED LADY OCTAVIA'S LIFE TO DANGER!

I'LL REWARD YOU WITH THIS FOR YOUR CARELESS BLUNDER!

GET UP!

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…!

ENOUGH, STOP IT!

TO BLAME HIM ANY FURTHER...

THERE'S NO REASON...

AS YOU WISH.

AS YOU CAN SEE, I'M UN-HARMED.

PLEASE, STOP IT DEMI-TORIUS.

WHAT'S MORE, IT WAS MY OWN ACTIONS WHICH BROUGHT ABOUT THE INCIDENT...

...

YOU'RE DEMOTED ANYWAY!

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ENOUGH, ROXANNE!

BUT...

BUT HE FOUND HIMSELF SO IMMERSED IN HAND TO HAND COMBAT THAT HE FORGOT HIS INITIAL DUTY AND LEFT THE PALANQUIN.

I HAD ORDERED HIM TO STICK TO THE ESCORT.

WILL YOU REALLY ALLOW HIM TO BE DEMOTED?

HE SAW THROUGH THE MAIN AIM OF THE ASSASSINS.

AT PRESENT THERE ARE FOUR WHO'RE ABLE TO SPEAK.

THE PERPE-TRATORS NUMBER 12 IN TOTAL.

WE'LL HAVE THEM CONFESS AT ONCE.

DEARIE ME, HE SURE IS STUBBORN...

I CANNOT OVERLOOK HIM FORGETTING THE CORE OF HIS TASK.

BLOOD...!

EH?

YOU'LL CATCH A CHILL IN THIS.

YOU SHOULD CHANGE YOUR ATTIRE.

YOU MUST BE TIRED, LADY OCTAVIA.

THOSE HANDS MAY HAVE PROTECTED ME...

HE DEFEATED THE ASSASSINS BARE HANDED...

ACROSS MY BODY...

HE LEFT SOME OF THE BLOOD FROM HIS HANDS...

BUT WHY DIDN'T IT SEEM...

UNPLEASANT...

YET WHILE STILL COATED IN BLOOD HE TOUCHED ME...

WHAT TERRI-FYING THINGS...

YOUR MAJESTY?

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

OF A MAN TOUCHING YOUR SKIN?

ARE YOU SCARED...

OUCH...

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ケルベロスの泉

WHAT DO I DO?

I CAN HARDLY GO OUT AND APOLOGISE...

LIKE THIS CAN I.

I KNEW IT, I'LL COME BACK LATER!

I MUST APOLOGISE FOR THE UNSAVOURY APPEAR-ANCE.

I HEARD FROM ROXANNE, RUSKA...

IS THAT THE EMPRESS DOWAGER...?!

I WOULD ABSOLUTELY WISH FOR YOU TO CONTINUE YOUR GUARD DUTY IN SUCH A MANNER.

IF IT'S A REQUEST FROM ME, EVEN YOUR FATHER CANNOT REFUSE.

SHALL I TELL YOU WHAT I TRIED TO STRESS TO DEMITORIUS?

YOU DO ME TOO GREAT A KINDNESS... I HAVE NO WORDS OF GRATITUTDE.

NOT AT ALL... IT WAS MERE LUCK THAT SHE WAS SAVED, I ACCOMPLISHED NOTHING.

IT SEEMS YOU MANAGED TO PROTECT OCTAVIA...

YOU TRULY HAVE MY THANKS...

RUS-KA.

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YOU NEEDN'T BE SO FORMAL.

...

TO SO BADLY TREAT ONE WHO WAS MERELY DOING HIS DUTY...

YOU POOR THING...

SUCH LOYALTY...

AND DEDICATION...

WOULD YOU CONTINUE TO LEND ME THAT POWER FOR THE SAKE OF THE JULIO-CLAUDIAN DYNASTY?

...?

...?!

TO CARRY OUT MY ORDERS...

I WILL RISK MY LIFE...

I HAVE HIGH HOPES FOR YOU...

MY DEAR LITTLE GUARD.

DID I SEE SOMETHING I WASN'T MEANT TO?

THUMP

THUMP

...

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THIS IS MY SON, RUSKA.

NOT AT ALL LIKE THE SON OF THE HEROIC LION.

HE CERTAINLY SEEMS ADORABLE.

YOU SIMPLETON!

IN LADY AGRIPPINA'S PRESENCE YOU'RE TO BOW!

IT'S FINE, I DON'T MIND.

I'M THANKFUL FOR YOU COMING.

VERY WELL THEN, I LEAVE IT ALL TO YOU...

HERE ARE THE BOY'S CLOTHES.

?

HE'S YOUNGER, BUT HE CERTAINLY RESEMBLES HIS MAJESTY DOMITIUS.

IT SHOULD BE PERFECT...

...

Y... YES...

THIS IS TO BE YOUR FIRST JOB RUKSA!

IF YOU'RE A MAN, YOU'LL CARRY YOUR MISSION OUT PERFECTLY!

DON'T ASK ANY NEEDLESS QUESTIONS!

SIMPLY PUT ON THOSE CLOTHES, AND GET IN THE PALANQUIN.

IT'S A PROMISE.

REALLY?!

I'LL REALLY BE ABLE TO MEET MOTHER?!

MANAGE TO FINISH IT...

AND I'LL LET YOU SEE YOUR MOTHER!

!

I'LL SOON BE ABLE TO...

...

MY BELOVED MOTHER...

MEET MOTHER!

SOON...

GUGYAAAAH!

?!

HYAAAH!

GAFUH!

!

MY APOLO-GIES...

FORGIVE ME, BOY...

AH...

AH...

THIS IS SIMPLY WORK.

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HE'S CERTAINLY A TOUGH KID

HE'S STILL BREATHING...

HIS FEATURES MATCH

THERE SHOULD BE NO PROBLEMS.

IS THIS REALLY THE END?

HE'S BLEEDING WE'VE NO TIME!

I'LL FINISH HIS THROAT QUIET TIL MORE SUITABLE.

HELP ME FATHER!

HELP ME...

No...

DON'T DIE!

DON'T SPEAK ROXANNE!

FOR THE COMMANDER TO USE HIS OWN SON...

ISN'T IT?!

TO USE HIM AS A DECOY...

IT'S TOO CRUEL...

HAD I NOT FAILED TO REALISE WHERE THE ASSASSINS WOULD ATTACK, NONE OF THIS WOULD'VE HAPPENED!

ALL THE LIABILITY FALLS UPON ME!

BUT MASTER...

WHY DIDN'T YOU COME TO SAVE ME?

WHERE ARE YOU FATHER?

FATHER...

CAST ME ASIDE..?!

DID YOU...

IN THE END I NEVER MET MOTHER.

I'M SURE THAT BACK THEN, I HAD DIED.

WHILE HER TRUE SPIRIT...

EEH?!

YES...

DO YOU HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH ME?

LADY OCTAVIA.

YOU CAN REALLY FIGURE OUT WHO IT IS IF SOMEONE'S THERE?

SO WITHOUT SEEING ANYTHING...

EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN UNIQUE GIVEAWAYS.

LIKE HOW YOU BREATHE, OR THE SOUND OF YOUR FOOTSTEPS.

H... HOW...

DID YOU KNOW IT WAS ME?

WHEN YOU SHARPEN YOUR ENTIRE PERCEPTION, YOU CAN FIND OUT ALL SORTS OF THINGS FROM THE SURROUNDING AREA.

AAH...

SO THAT WAS IT.

AH!

I FIGURED IT OUT FROM THE SMELL OF THE PERFUME YOU LIKE TO USE.

THE DECIDING POINT, WAS YOUR SMELL.

SHALL I REVEAL TRICK THE TO YOU?

THEY'RE LOVELY WORDS LACKING ULTERIOR MOTIVE.

TO THINK SUCH A SWEET FLOWER COULD BLOOM IN THIS ROTTEN, ARTIFICE TOWN.

I FIGURED I HAD TO GO TO SUCH LENGTHS TO BE PROPERLY PREPARED.

IT'S JUST ME...

SO THE PRAETORIAN GUARD RECOGNISE SUCH SLIGHT MATTERS?

I WAS WRONG, HE'S NOT COLD AND HARD TO APPROACH...

AH, YES. DUTY...

THERE IS A SALVATION...

BEAR WITH IT...

DO NOT BE ABSURD, NO THANKS ARE NEEDED.

SAY ONE THING... I WISH TO THANK YOU FOR...

IF I COULD...

SIR RUSKA...

IT WAS SIMPLY MY DUTY.

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IS SIMPLY PART OF HIS WORK...

HIS RISKING HIS LIFE TO PROTECT ME...

MM...

A GOOD NIGHT TO YOU TOO!

JUST WHAT HAD I BEEN HOPING FOR?

I WISH YOU A SOUND SLEEP!

NOW, YOUR MAJESTY THE EMPRESS...